

# IMPACT

*July 2012*

A Monthly Publication of Impact Ministries

*Surviving  
the Hateful Divorce*  
By Jim Richards

*I Did Not See It  
Coming—Do You?*  
By Seth Dunn



# Surviving the Hateful Divorce

We all know divorce is painful, usually brutal, and in most cases devastating to our self-worth. But the things we have been taught about divorce may well make it even more devastating for a Christian than a non-Christian; after all, something only has the power to affect us based on the significance we attach to it. What we have been taught about divorce causes us to pass self-judgments at nearly every level. These self-judgments are a major factor in the massive devastation.

In Mal. 2:16 we have the famously quoted verse, *For the Lord God of Israel says, That He hates divorce...* Unfortunately that verse is quoted with the implication that God also hates the divorcee. When we consider the context of this strong warning it is much more than a statement against divorce. It is actually a statement against treachery in divorce. Some scholars say this refers to the **hateful divorce**.

Mal. 2:15 points out that God is witness against those who deal treacherously and cover the violence against their wives. *Let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth...* The Amplified Bible may give us the picture more clearly: *For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I hate divorce and marital separation and him who covers his garment [his wife] with violence.* (2:16) In verse 17 we give witness to the final insult when people say, *How have I wearied God?* In other words “I haven’t done anything!”

Even in the Old Testament man lived in the self-deception that if they covered their evil ways, if they were not seen by men, they somehow felt they were not seen by God! But God warns in Malachi that He Himself had been witness to their ways!

In the New Testament when discussing divorce the proper term is often “putting away.” It seems there is a difference between putting away and actual divorce. Putting away was when a man stopped supporting his wife and actually made her leave without a legal writ of divorce. As such the only way she could survive was to be a harlot or a polygamist; hence, she commits adultery and the person who marries her commits adultery.

This and many other manipulative actions form the basis of the hateful divorce. I have observed that when there is a divorce among Christians it is usually a hateful divorce. It is a divorce where one party treats the other party so harshly, withholds affection, withholds finances, ridicules, and otherwise treats treacherously, they are forced to leave. Sadly, that person who is forced to leave is very often so devastated by the cruel, manipulative treatment that they compromise themselves morally in a desperate search for some feelings of love and acceptance. In these situations the original perpetrator can say, “He or she left me, my hands are clean.” Then a naïve, carnal Church runs to the support of the true violator while ostracizing the true victim!

When Jesus was asked a trick question about the legal justification for divorce He took the conversation straight to the real issue. *Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.* (Matt. 19:8) God has never wanted mankind to suffer the pain and rejection of divorce, but He didn’t want us to use His Word to find the legal loopholes to manipulate the situation. People who want to know the doctrine of divorce are usually looking for their excuse. People wanting to know the cause of divorce are usually looking for solutions. Jesus didn’t discuss the doctrine of divorce but the cause. Anytime there is divorce there is hardness of heart on one or both sides!

Hardness of heart manifests in many ways, but no matter what the contributing factors hardness of heart begins by creating insensitivity to God! *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts, Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.* (Eph. 4:18-19, NIV) Any time we move in selfishness toward anyone we have to resist the



Holy Spirit leading us to walk in love. Likewise, when we are hurt by others and we do not send it away (forgive) we must develop a hardness as a means of survival. So whether you are the one who is initiating the hurt or the one who is attempting to survive the hurt, failure to handle it according to God's wisdom can end in hardness of heart.

If you have been the initiator of a hateful divorce you must face the issue in your own heart. You must repent of your own treachery or your heart will forever remain hard to the Lord. You may have gotten the approval of the Church, but their approval is no substitute for God's healing in your own heart.

If, on the other hand, you were the victim in a hateful divorce, you are probably dealing with rejection and self-worth issues in such a monumental manner that it is affecting your entire life! When a self-righteous person pushes you out of a marriage it can push you into immorality or other compromising lifestyles; then your own heart condemns you. You can't sort out what is the guilt related to your own sins or the offenses poured on you by your former spouse!

Many people who are the subject of a hateful divorce forever define themselves by their divorce. I remember a woman whose husband wanted to push her out of the marriage while maintaining the approval of the local church. Every day he would tell her she was ugly. No matter how much effort she put into appearance he degraded her.

We must remember that beliefs get written on our heart in times of strong emotions. A person could say in their own heart, "I'll find someone who thinks I'm beautiful." Then the rest of their life could be a moral compromise seeking to find the approval of a man. These hateful divorces are absolutely devastating to every sense of dignity and worth! The message of violence, rejection, manipulation, and degradation is, "You are worthless; you are unlovable; you are not wanted!" Then all of that is compounded by our self-judgments and destructive self-talk!

Then it seems the final blow comes when the perpetrator of a hateful divorce is hailed by the Church as the innocent one who has the right to remarry and be happy. In this twisted saga God is usually blamed. The actions of the Church are seen as the thoughts of God and the victim faces what feels like the ultimate rejection. Even God has disapproved of them! I have often asked pastors, "Who is the worst sinner, the one who commits adultery, the one who leaves, or the one who drives them away?" My hope was to help everyone see that both parties of a divorce need help regardless of who is guilty of what. It is not our place to judge or take sides. It is our place to recover and restore the lost sheep!

Although the path to your destruction may have been complex, the path to your recovery is simple. You have to cast away anything and everything that causes you to stumble. In other words, you have to send away (forgive) all offenses. Remember, forgiveness is not what you do about the person who wronged you. It is what you do with the feelings of hurt, pain, and shame to which you are so desperately clinging! Each time you have a negative thought or feeling about you, send it away! If you don't send it away it remains within you causing pain and destruction. Remember, your perpetrator only hurt you once; but you hurt yourself every time you relive those offenses. You give them life by holding on to them and reliving them.

Then you must put on your true identity in Jesus. You must surrender every opinion you have developed about yourself to the cross of Christ. You are as He is because you are in Him! You have no right to see or feel anything about yourself that is inconsistent with who Jesus is!

There is only one path that we all must make in this journey of faith. We must believe in our heart what Jesus accomplished through His resurrection. We must put off any sense of self that is independent of who we are in Him. We must put on the new man who has been recreated in His likeness and image.

We all want our problems to seem more complicated than this, but they aren't. We complicate our problems to mask our unbelief and resistance to putting on our new identity in Christ! The moment we make our challenges unique we have basically said, "Jesus didn't solve these problems through His death, burial, and resurrection. These are special problems!" Put off the old you, the hurt you, the wounded you, and put on the new, wonderful, healed, and happy you!

*We must remember that beliefs get written on our heart in times of strong emotions.*





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*T*here is nothing outside of your relationship with God that will affect your life and destiny more than your marriage. It is sad to say, but most believers will be more affected by their marriage than by the Lord Jesus! More people will miss their destiny because of a chaotic personal relationship than possibly any other reason! So it stands to reason this should be an area that we continually nurture!

We are social, emotional, relationship-oriented beings; therefore, we are greatly susceptible to the people in our environments, especially those with whom we have deeply emotional, loving, and/or sexual connections. Some studies have shown that when two people connect emotionally their brainwaves begin to show up in the other person. In other words, every minute of every day we are being influenced by the people in our world. This is why God's Word gives us such strong warnings about the people with whom we choose to fellowship, i.e., share our life.

Then there is the simple factor of how our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and even our self-worth are affected by the quality of our relationships. Since love is an issue of the heart, and the heart greatly affects our sense of identity, we have to consider the very real possibility that our sense of identity, or how we see ourselves, could be drastically affected by how those we love see us!

The Bible says we become *one body* with a person with whom we have sexual relations. (1 Cor. 6:16) This word "body" can mean "a group becoming one society, social or ethical group, or the creating of a mystical bond." For example, *we are being many are one body in Christ*. (Rom. 12:5) When we become *one body* it has the ability to influence our beliefs, values, and the direction of our life!

This all means that managing, developing, and nurturing our most intimate relationship is of the utmost importance. Whether you are married, single, divorced, planning to get married, or a marriage counselor, ***Everything About Love*** will help you acquire tools and discover truths that make it possible for you to have a happy, healthy, life-giving relationship.

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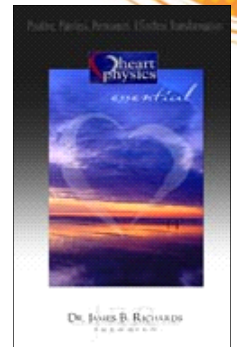
*Dear Dr. Richards and Bee,*

*We received **Heart Physics** in September and began a weekly meeting with five people. By December, we had seven. We enthusiastically share the changes we are noticing in ourselves--especially in the area of self-worth. Since we started realizing that Jesus Christ is in us AND for us we have become strong and courageous.*

*At our regular meetings we almost fight to get a turn to talk. We have read about ten of your books and now study the **Creating Wealth** series. We were extremely blessed to watch you on Sid Roth as he is also someone we respect.*

*Thank you for your personal interest in Prince George. We can hardly wait for you to be here August 1 and have been inviting many of our friends. We want to see others experience the changes like we are. Our hope is to see our city come to God and for freedom for those with addictions.*

*Blessings from Canada!*



My prayer partners and I are having immediate results with Putting Off and Putting On [from *Wisdom for Healing*.] We look forward to sharing what we are learning from Dr. Jim and seeing a greater difference in all our lives by God's grace. ~JB~

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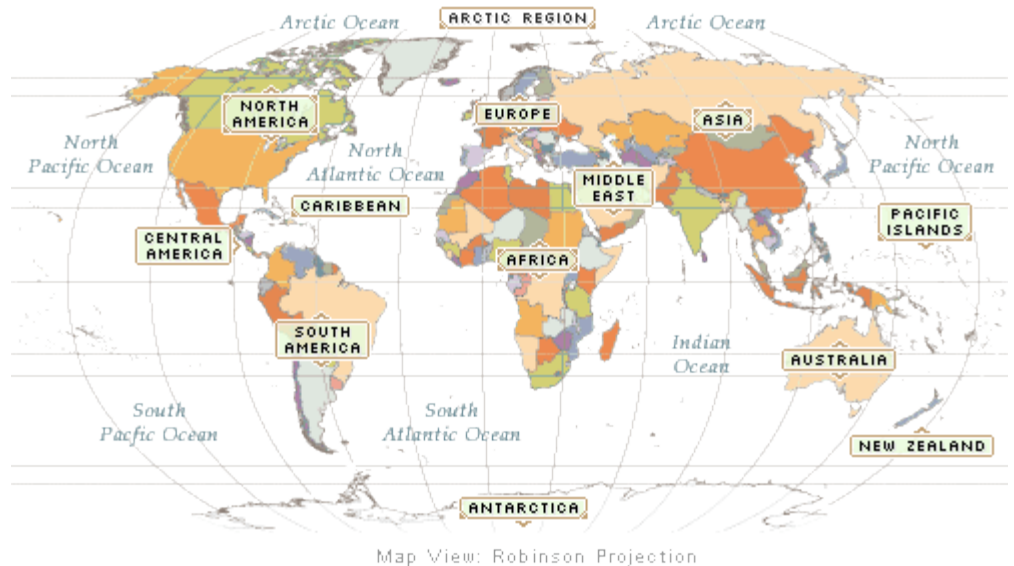
**Until this year I didn't realize how religious I was. God led me to you, Dr. Richards, in an unusual way.**

**I am being blessed and trusting God to bring truth, light, and healing. I see where I have been off in some of my foundational teaching. I was operating more out of law than faith righteousness. My heart is beginning to awaken. ~JL~**

# I Did Not See it Coming – Do You?

By Seth Dunn

As a teenager I had many dreams. Dreams of having a family, a career, and doing many great things in this life that I have been given. What I did not see coming was the amazing life that God had in mind for me, and I had no idea as a teenager that this life would include mission work. You may be no different. As a teenager or an adult, as you pursue God you will find delightful surprises in front of you, and it may include mission work.



At the age of 18, I went on my first short-term mission trip. It changed my life – *no, it really did*. I experienced God using me to do His work on this earth. I saw a deaf baby healed, I saw many people born again, I made many new friends (some of whom are still my friends to this day) and I saw a bigger world in front of me.

As I embarked on my adult life I found that I could not get away from the experience that I had on that first short-term mission trip. Over time I had to admit to myself that my heart was being pulled to be a fulltime short-term missionary. My heart was being pulled to duplicate for others what I had experienced on my first short-term mission trip. I wanted to provide people with the opportunity to experience God using them in a powerful way for His Kingdom.

Here we are, 100 teams and over 1,000 team members later, and the adventure of providing people with amazing short-term mission trips is still before me. Today it is about providing people with a truly amazing short-term mission trip where their life is impacted, where they serve in a significant way in God's Kingdom, where fulltime missionaries are served and loved, where people of all kinds are loved with the love of God, where children are made to smile and where everyone involved is challenged to see God in a new light. It is about changing the way people see God.

## A short-term mission team member view ...

Today is truly a day of relaxation – almost anticlimactic when compared to the preceding 6 days. I began this trip in nervous anticipation. My days as a physician are always orderly and scheduled. Now I was heading into a week of the unknown. When we landed in Costa Rica and the rear hatch of the plane opened and heat and humidity entered the cabin I knew I had entered a different world. As we drove from the airport I entered a world of hustle bustle traffic that was fast and lacked courtesy. We passed all the homes that were fenced, windows barred, fierce dogs barking in the yards making San Jose seem like a cold, inhospitable, and untrusting place. I thought “My Lord, what are we in for?”

The first day's bus ride brought more of the same. I didn't know where we were going or what to expect. The bus stopped at the top of the hill and I peered down a street that seemed ragged, pot hole ridden. I thought, “OK Lord, here we go.” The stench at the bottom of the hill was strong. The filthy water trickling down the path going up to church and the feces on the pathway were nearly overpowering. Nevertheless, I knew God had a job for us to complete. What I found at the top of the hill was unexpected: not cold, distant, ragged, starving people but rather warm smiles and handshakes, greetings. I could see the Holy Spirit in their eyes.

What followed were four of the hardest working days of my life, but I felt God had a vision here. At 60, I poured out what was left in my body. Every night my body ached and I wondered if I would be able to go on, but every morning I awoke refreshed. Somehow, the aches were gone, and ready for another day to serve my God. On Thursday our crew moved 25 tons of sand and rock up that trail without a word of complaint but rather happy and cheerful. Then out



of the ghetto came worship music. I raised my arms to the sky. God was saying, “I am here.” Work became worship. Our team accomplished much more than I anticipated but what struck me was our hosts who wept in thankfulness at the end of our week. I felt God whispering, “It is good.” In retrospect I felt God had called us to build His Island in a sea of hell. What a privilege to work next to brothers and sisters who were not passively waiting for help but deeply invested in building a small corner of God’s Kingdom.

As I sit by the ocean, I know I’ll always be a better man because of it. Praise God! Thank you for this awesome opportunity! To share this with my son was a life-changing experience. ~Jeff~

It is about a change of view, a change of heart, a change in how people see God, a change in how people see their interaction with this world and a change in their view of their part in God’s Kingdom. I did not see it coming, but just as Jeff so eloquently wrote about his life change, so was my life changed as an 18 year old on my first trip. Would you like to experience this change?

### **A team member view after a trip (names changed for privacy) ...**

Praise God! I just heard from my sister. I’d have to say In Motion really lives up to its name: your trips have a funny way of propelling saints into motion. I just thank God for you, because of ya’ll God has opened a door to minister to my entire family.

With my sister, Jodie, “In Motion” the two of us together create a bit of momentum. Jodie and I are very different, but God has given us the opportunity to minister to two completely different parts of the world. I can’t express to you how much I have been believing God that Jodie would be “ruined” on this trip. I’ve prayed that what He has called her to would be made known to her, and that her life will turn to serving Him.

I just wanted to tell you that I was nearly in tears thinking about how great God has been in the past two trips you have taken with DDA. My life has never been the same. God has redeemed every second of time that I felt I had lost. Truly I am not the same person!!!! ~Amy~

Having spent a good number of years as a youth pastor, a church member, working in construction and a variety of other life events – I must say that there is nothing like a short-term mission trip for creating significant life change. *I did not see it coming!* Church is good, youth camp is good, special meetings are good, but a short-term mission trip is different from them all. Getting outside your “normal” world and going on a trip truly opens you up to great new adventures with God. It does ‘ruin’ your pattern of life.

Where are you today? Are you ready to stir your life up a bit? Are you ready to put yourself in a spot for potential life change, huge life change? Are you ready to see God differently? Consider going on a short-term mission trip. I did not see this amazing life that God has for me coming, and maybe you haven’t either. Give it a try; give God a chance to turn your world right side up in ways you do not know you want and need.

Anyone can go, anyone can experience amazing life transformation; and we will make it as easy for you as possible. You will have some work to do, but we guarantee you an amazing life altering experience as you benefit God’s Kingdom.

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I didn’t see it coming, but I sure am glad it came into my life. I am glad that God grabbed hold of my heart, and today I see God differently. ~Seth Dunn~

*Seth Dunn is Executive Director of In Motion Ministries since 1996 and has been with IMM for 24 years.*

*Seth began serving God through missions at the age of 15, while experiencing a short-term mission trip as a team member. Being a part of sharing the love and grace of Jesus Christ with people in another country impacted his life deeply, setting the course for his career and calling: to provide others with this opportunity. In the years that followed, Seth has led 38 short-term mission teams to 21 different countries, giving hundreds of people the opportunity to serve the Lord by serving others; teaching them to share the gospel, bring humanitarian aid, and invest their time, talents, energy, and hard work into the lives and ministries of full-time missionaries living abroad.*



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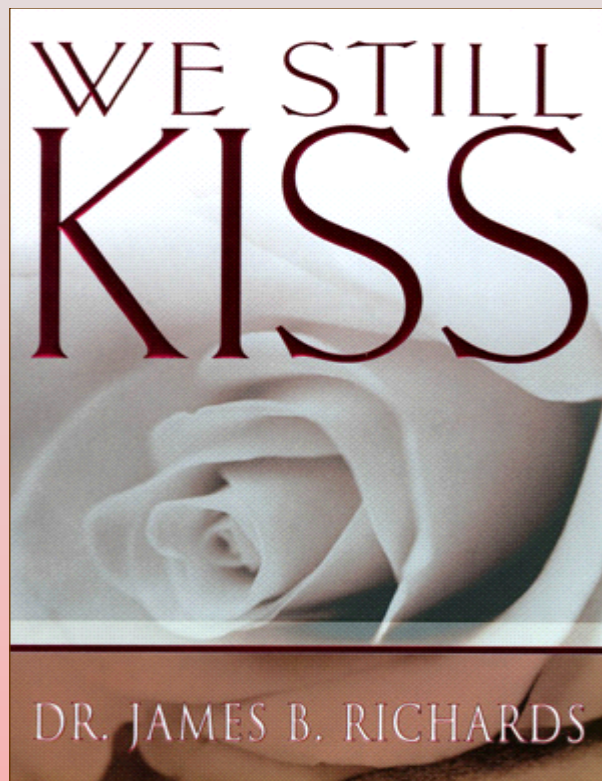
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Your struggles are no different than anyone's. The Bible says *No temptation has taken you but such is common for all men...* In other words, you're not that different from anyone. In fact, the frustration of never completely overcoming certain problems may be number one among the majority of serious believers! People repent over and over only to face the same situation again or make the same mistake again. They follow every religious formula they've ever heard. In fact, that's the problem; we attempt what we've been taught instead of what the Bible prescribes for continuous, progressive, spiritual growth while leaving our problems behind!

If you really knew how you would put an end to these recurring problems. But when you fail enough times you eventually blame yourself or God and neither of these options brings relief, peace, or victory over the problem.

- Have you ever felt fear and wished you could make it go away instantly?
- Are you troubled by recurring temptations?
- Do you seem vulnerable to certain types of problems?
- Do you find yourself making the same kind of bad decisions repeatedly?
- Do you forgive someone over and over and the same bad feelings always come back?

Now you have a solution based on God's Word, your identity in Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. You can now put off any problem that Jesus conquered through His death, burial, and resurrection; then you can put on your new identity in Christ!

The main reason we have repetitive problems is because we seldom eliminate the root cause. At the root of every limiting belief is an offense that needs to be sent away! Until now you had no way to identify the offense and effectively send it away, but now you have the teaching and the tools!

- Find the root to any behavioral, emotional, or physical problem!
- Send away buried emotions and feelings that have subconsciously driven your behavior!
- Learn the secret to the Urim and the Thummim used by Old Testament priests and kings!
- Once you identify any root problem send it away in seconds!
- Identify and send away limiting beliefs that form the boundaries of your heart!
- Put on new beliefs based on your identity in Jesus!
- Send away sickness and pain with new confidence!
- Develop a heart tool that you will use the rest of your life!

Without knowing the root cause of a problem it is like looking in the mirror when you're sick and attempting to diagnose why you have a fever. Looking at the outside can never allow you to see what is inside! In fact, the mindset that got you into your problem does not have the ability to see the problem or the solution.

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